

Transcribed Excerpt 1 from Interview with Korean War Veteran William Donald Sinclair, April 2, 2004

Excerpt 1

William Donald Sinclair: Because of lack of experience, and advancing technology, and new kinds of airplanes -- and trying to train in combat, really. I flew a hundred missions. That was a tour. And I signed up for a second tour so I could stay. Yeah, I was young and foolish. And I had eight missions on my second tour. When they found out that 5th Air Force in Japan -- which was the controlling Air Force agency over in that part of the world -- was keeping all this combat talent, and Air Force Headquarters came down and really hammered. And almost literally overnight, three or four of us were picked up and sent to Japan -- not home -- but to Japan. And we were sent to the 35th Fighter Group, which was made up of various National Guard units and Mustangs -- F51s. Because, again, I had this experience. They didn't let me go home. They sent me to Japan. And these units were not combat ready. And we were trying to get them to be combat ready. And they were really in bad shape, frankly. They were people from Wyoming, and Arizona Guard, as I remember, and various guard units -- kind of conglomerate group from various states that had been folded together and made into a combat unit. And they were training. I know you're interested in what I thought of Tagoo. It was -- it had no charm. There was no attraction there for me. I loved Japan. And later had two assignments there -- and later in my military career. But I never had any love for Korea. It was a bitter cold nation surrounded on all sides by water. The people were -- the culture was so alien to me as a young man, that I didn't have any attraction to it. And the North Koreans were such vicious enemies and so brutal -- but we took care of them. And air power in that war was predominant. In fact, I remember a particular mission when we caught a mixed Chinese and North Korean division in the open. And we just attacked them with napalm. And we killed hundreds and hundreds of Chinese and North Korean soldiers. I couldn't see how they could possibly stand in the midst of all this conflagration. I remember distinctly one soldier standing under a little tree. (They don't know what big trees are like we do here in Colorado.) But around him was just devastation, bodies everywhere. The -- later in my tour in Korea, I was sent to be a forward air controller. And I was sent to the 101st Airborne, the 107th RCT, and I did two months duty with them. And that was a great experience for me. I loved it.